

to the cleansing legislative process, in which the American people expect public hearings, open and full debate, a committee amendment process, and a meaningful opportunity to make specific changes to the legislation.

At each of these normal checkpoints of legislative procedure, the public and their elected representatives were denied the opportunity to participate fully in the legislative process, to offer and debate amendments and vote on them to produce a legislative output that hopefully reflects a solid consensus, or, at least, the end result of a democratic process.

Instead, we are engaged in a debate without the opportunity to make substantive and necessary changes to either piece of legislation through floor amendments, and we will be compelled to vote these competing measures either up or down without meaningful change.

Given the opportunity, I would have preferred that both bills be neutral on the issues of abortion and assisted suicide.

While there has been a good faith attempt in the Dingell/Ganske legislation to address these two matters, I strongly believe that the language on such issues must be so clear as to withstand judicial scrutiny that health care plans are not required to provide assisted suicide or abortion services.

Given the opportunity, I would have offered the following language that would achieve this important objective:

Amend Section 108 and 109 of H.R. 3605 by adding the following new subsection (c):

"(c) Nothing in this Act shall be construed as requiring a group health plan or health insurance coverage to provide, pay for, refer for, or ensure the availability of or access to any benefit or service, including the use of facilities, related to an abortion or any item or service for which use of Federal funds is prohibited under the Assisted Suicide Funding Restriction Act of 1997. Nothing in the preceding sentence shall be construed as allowing a group health plan or health insurance converge to deny any benefit or service related to treatment for medical complications resulting from an abortion."

Amend Section 141 of H.R. 3605 by adding the following new subsection (b)(3):

"(b)(3) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to cause a group health plan or health insurance issuer to violate its ethical, moral or religious benefits."

I have been assured by the distinguished gentleman from Michigan, Mr. DINGELL, the Ranking Democrat of the Commerce Committee, that it is his intent that the legislative history should reflect that his legislation seeks to be neutral on these two issues.

With that statement of legislative intent, I plan to support the Dingell/Ganske substitute.

I want to make it clear on this point that I will seek inclusion of the legislative language that I have just referenced in any further managed care legislation that this Congress may consider.

CHILD NUTRITION AND WIC REAUTHORIZATION AMENDMENTS OF 1998

SPEECH OF

HON. JOSEPH P. KENNEDY II

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 20, 1998

Mr. KENNEDY of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3874, the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act. This bill gives our states more opportunity to fight against a problem that plagues our nation even in these prosperous times—child hunger.

This bill is linked to almost every issue we struggle with on this House floor. Every year, we discover stronger links between child nutrition and all the indicators of a child's future. Better nutrition means better learning, better test scores, better health, better discipline.

But child hunger is alive and well in America. I've traveled all over my home state of Massachusetts hearing about how and why children go without adequate nutrition. And I've heard about the safety net that keeps many of our kids from going hungry—healthy meals at school, after school, and at summer feeding sites.

We can protect our children from hunger. We can guarantee that every child has an opportunity to get good quality nutrition year round. This bill doesn't do everything I'd like, but it takes big steps in the right direction.

This bill would allow more of our states to experiment with universal free breakfast. In districts that have tried free breakfast—in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and parts of Minnesota—more kids are showing up for breakfast, kids are doing better in school, and kids are behaving better.

This bill allows more sites to participate in the summer feeding service, and makes it easier for the states to administer those programs. It allows more schools to use federal funds to serve meals at after-school programs. And it allows teenage children to get free after-school snacks in low-income communities.

Mr. Speaker, this bill not only provides more meals for more children, but it makes it easier for the states to use federal money in their own efforts to fight child hunger. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bill.

WAXMAN AMENDMENT REMARKS

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 23, 1998

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of the Waxman amendment.

The Hudson River is drowning and we need to throw it a life jacket.

It is time to put an end to Congress's interference in the cleaning up of our communities and eliminate the alarming language attached to the VA-HUD appropriations report that will suffocate public health and bulldoze environmental protections.

It is time to demand of our federal government that they not kowtow to big companies

like General Electric, big companies who need to start taking responsibility for the deleterious effect their factories are having on our society.

The Hudson River is now contaminated with toxic PCBs—one of the most harmful pollutants known, in large part because General Electric and other companies allowed these dangerous poisons to seep into our waterways.

General Electric maintains that the PCBs are entombed under silt—that the river is cleaning itself. Today there is new evidence that the situation is worse than our worst nightmare. PCBs are escaping from the sediments in the Hudson River and are being carried downstream and settling in other parts of the river contaminating more and more fish and more and more people.

The New York regional administrator of the EPA stated today that "the fact that these PCBs are so rapidly reentering the river system is startling. Given what we know about the health risks of eating contaminated fish, this information is even more startling."

Based upon all of the evidence, the EPA is convinced, and so am I, that PCB contamination is a significant threat to public health and the environment.

How much more evidence do we need? How many more experts need to tell us that something needs to be done? How many more New Yorkers need to suffer from immediate and long-term health problems posed by toxic PCB pollution?

Mr. Chairman, we need to dredge the polluted waters of the Hudson and we need to do it now. New York City is built on islands surrounding water, water which cannot be utilized to its fullest potential because of the lethal levels of contaminants. We need to seize this moment and make a last ditch effort to clean up the Hudson River waterfront and make it the jewel it once was.

It is imperative that the Hudson not be sent down the river and New Yorkers not be forced to walk the plank.

Support the Waxman amendment. Eliminate these dangerous riders.

U.N. DUES ARE A LEGAL OBLIGATION

HON. LEE HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 24, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, some observers have argued that we do not owe to the United Nations the dues we have been assessed by that organization. I would like to set the record straight.

I recently posed a series of questions to the Department of State regarding the nature of our international legal obligations to the United Nations. The reply I received to those questions indicates that while Congress can refuse to pay the bills we owe, that in no way relieves our responsibility to pay those bills.

I ask permission to include in the RECORD my correspondence with the Department of State on this subject, and encourage my colleagues to review it.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, DC, July 8, 1998.

Hon. LEE H. HAMILTON
House of Representatives

DEAR MR. HAMILTON: Thank you for your letter of May 15, raising several important